

U.S. Fire Administration Kicks Off Public Safety Campaign to End #1 Cause of Preventable Home Fire Deaths – Fires Caused By Smoking Materials

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced today a ***Smoking & Home Fires Campaign*** to put an end to the number one cause of preventable home fire deaths – fires started by smoking materials. The campaign is designed to alert smokers and those who live with smokers about simple steps they can take to stop the fire before it starts in their home. The USFA, which is a division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is encouraging smokers to "Put It Out. All the Way. Every Time."

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"What's important to remember is that smoking home fires can easily be prevented. It just takes a few seconds to light up – and a few seconds to make sure that cigarette is really out."

"Most smoking-related home fires happen on beds, furniture, or in trash when smokers do not put cigarettes all the way out, toss hot ashes in the trash or fall asleep while smoking," said U.S. Fire Administrator Greg Cade. "What's important to remember is that smoking home fires can easily be prevented. It just takes a few seconds to light up – and a few seconds to make sure that cigarette is really out."

Chief Cade pointed out that nationally, 23% (46 million) of adults are smokers, and in some states that percentage is as high as 28.7%.

Every year, about 1,000 people are killed in smoking-related home fires.

According to the USFA, one-in-four people killed in home fires is not the smoker whose cigarette caused the fire. In fact, 34% were children of the smokers and

25% were neighbors or friends of the smokers. Too often, the victim is the firefighter trying to save them. On January 12, 1992, a seven-year-old Maryland boy died as a result of a fire caused by smoking-related materials, as well as Kenny Hedrick, a volunteer firefighter, who was trapped and died in the basement of that home. Kenny's mother Cathy Hedrick, Director of Survivor Programs for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation said, "The cause of this tragic fire that took the lives of two innocent victims was a smoldering cigarette in the family room."

To demonstrate how quickly a smoldering cigarette can turn into a raging fire, Chief Cade showed a video demonstration at the campaign launch in Washington D.C. The video can be seen at www.usfa.dhs.gov/smoking.

The ***Smoking & Home Fires Campaign*** warns about the dangers of careless smoking and urges smokers to do it outside if they need to smoke. Inside the home, people should use big ashtrays with a stable base and really put the cigarette out, don't just tap it into the ashtray. People should especially make sure their cigarette is fully out if they are drowsy due to medicine or alcohol.

The USFA's ***Smoking & Home Fires Campaign*** is working in partnership with 13 national organizations to spread the message about fire safety including the American Fire Sprinkler Association, BIFMA International (Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association), Burn Foundation, The Center for Campus Fire Safety, Fire and Life Safety Section (part of IAFC), Florida Association of Fire and Life Safety Educators (FAFLSE), Home Safety Council, International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Association of Hispanic Firefighters, National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, Polyurethane Foam Association, Residential Fire Safety Institute, and Safe Kids Worldwide.

The campaign materials include a CD Toolkit with English and Spanish posters, brochures, fact sheets, public service announcements, PowerPoint presentations, an engaging video of a smoking-home fire demonstration, and more. The materials are available online and can be ordered by visiting www.usfa.dhs.gov/smoking. Fire departments and community organizations are encouraged to use these free materials.

A [video PSA](#) for the web is also available.

To arrange an interview with a USFA official, please contact Kim Varner at (202) 842-3600 x254 (kvarner@hagersharp.com) or David Neidlinger at (202) 842-3600 x241 (dneidlinger@hagersharp.com).

The U.S. Fire Administration has a mission to reduce life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies through leadership, advocacy, coordination and support. It is the federal leader in public fire education and awareness, fire service training, fire-related technology and data collection.

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